

AMERICAN STILL IN RUSSIAN JAIL

Details Told Of His Arrest
Nearly 2 Months Ago

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(Moscow Bureau of The Sun)

Moscow, Oct. 27—Nearly two months ago a young man from Sheffield, Mass. Newcomb Mott, crossed into Soviet territory without authority in a desolate area near the Norwegian border and was arrested.

Since then he has been in jail in the bleak northern Russian city of Murmansk anxiously awaiting the outcome of an apparently long investigation by Soviet authorities.

Reds Silent On Release

The American Embassy has repeatedly asked the Foreign Ministry for his immediate release, but questioned today officials said they had heard nothing.

Should Mott be brought to trial he faces a possible three-year sentence for illegal border crossing.

On two occasions William T. Shinn, Jr., a consular officer at the embassy, interviewed Mott in Murmansk with a Soviet investigator present.

Based on information from these interviews made available today by the embassy and some material from other sources, this story was put together:

Mott, a tall, husky, 27-year-old bachelor, came to Scandinavia last summer as a tourist.

Border Tour Suggested

With two days extra to spend and nothing planned, Finn Air suggested that he see the wild, barren terrain near the Norwegian-Soviet border rarely visited by Americans. It was described to him as an "outdoorsman's paradise."

That part of the world is so cold through most of the year that it takes three warm summers for trees to take root and grow. There are about six people for each square mile.

Mott changed planes twice in Finland and reached the small town of Kirkenes in Norway on September 2.

Kirkenes is popular among Scandinavians not only for its good sports but because of a view nearby of Soviet territory. The town is close to a major Norwegian mine. There is a nonferrous metal industry on the Soviet side of the border.

On the way to the hotel some

passengers on the bus mentioned to Mott that it was not possible to visit a small patch of the Soviet Union called Boris Gleb consisting of a store, church and information center.

This place on the Pasvik River is a Soviet enclave in Norway.

Last summer, for the first time, Soviet authorities allowed Scandinavians to visit it without the visas normally required to enter the Soviet Union.

Buying inexpensive vodka turned out to be a major inducement for the thousands who made trips there, according to authorities. The church was said to be of only moderate interest.

Mott, even though not a Scandinavian, caught an early morning bus September 4th for the 6-mile trip to Boris Gleb. He planned to return that afternoon to catch a plane out of Kirkenes. He was alone on the bus.

Language Poses Problem

Since he spoke neither Russian nor Norwegian he said he had trouble explaining where he wanted to go. The driver let him off at a side road, pointed and said Boris Gleb.

Had Mott stayed on the bus for Boris Gleb, the Norwegian border patrol would have informed him that Americans require visas for a visit.

Mott started walking down the road. He continued his search for the church and store for several hours across wild countryside.

Then he came on a road sign that seemed to say Soviet Union. He continued that way, passing yellow markers which he correctly took to be border signs.

Placed Under Arrest

He wandered about Soviet territory until he came on a group of three individuals, one of whom turned out to be a Soviet tourist official.

Mott showed his American passport and asked how he could stay there. The group immediately arrested him, according to the embassy. Two days later he was transferred to the Soviet jail in Murmansk.

The embassy heard of the arrest four days later from a news agency.

Books, Candy Sent

Mott maintains that he received conflicting information in Kirkenes on whether he could enter Boris Gleb without a visa. Because he said he was told of no definite prohibition he decided to proceed.

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